



The WisDOT Connector *Express*

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Joint Committee on Finance acts on transportation budget

The Legislature's budget-writing Joint Committee on Finance has taken action that preserves two transportation-related revenue provisions: an oil company assessment fee that would generate an estimated \$274 million over two years; and a \$20 increase in passenger vehicle registration fees (from \$55 to \$75) and similar increases for pick-up trucks that would generate about \$170 million over the biennium. Other provisions of Governor Doyle's proposed transportation budget also remain including increases for: maintenance and rehabilitation of the state highway system; aeronautics and public transit; and local transportation aid programs. All these provisions along with the rest of the state budget plan still have a long ways to go, requiring approval from both houses of the Legislature, a possible conference committee and Governor Doyle.

WisDOT welcomes back Nestler to head Bureau of State Highway Programs

Effective June 18th, Joe Nestler will become the new Director of WisDOT's Bureau of State Highway Programs. Nestler has over 20 years of transportation experience, with an emphasis on pavement engineering and asset management systems. Prior to leaving the Department in 2006, he spent seven years with WisDOT serving as chief of the bureau's Data Management, and Program Development and Analysis sections. The bureau's responsibilities include: coordinating the selection of projects to be included in WisDOT's multi-year highway program; monitoring financial plans for those programs; coordinating the collection, storage and use of data describing the condition/use of the state highway system; and providing specialized traffic forecasting and modeling services.

Dells wayside transferred to Ho-Chunk Nation

Land encompassing a wayside near Wisconsin Dells that includes Native American effigy mounds has been officially transferred to the Ho-Chunk Nation. A June 4th ceremony officially commemorated the transfer of the Kingsley Bend Wayside located along WIS 16 about three miles south of Wisconsin Dells. WisDOT has maintained and preserved the site since the early 1970's and deed transfer restrictions call for the Ho-Chunk Nation to maintain the property for public access as a wayside. The site includes some 22 effigy mounds depicting birds, bear and panthers with some of the mounds dating back to 600 A.D.

Amtrak Hiawatha ridership up in April

A total of 47,593 passengers boarded Amtrak Hiawatha Service trains in April - an increase of 1.4% over the same month in 2006 and setting another ridership record for that particular month. The Hiawatha Service has set monthly ridership records in 29 out of the past 30 months. Calendar year-to-date ridership through April totaled 178,996, up nearly 1% over the same period in 2006. Also in April, a total of 7,560 Hiawatha passengers got on/off at the Milwaukee Airport Rail station - an average of 252 people every day. Another 4,807 riders utilized the new Sturtevant station in April - about 160 per day. The Hiawatha makes seven daily round trips between Milwaukee and Chicago (six on Sundays). WisDOT and the state of Illinois help support the popular service.

Vehicle title status just a few clicks away

In response to growing customer demand for online services, WisDOT's Division of Motor Vehicles has added a new feature to its Web site allowing people to check on the status of a vehicle title. Customers expecting to receive a title in the mail and wanting to know when it will arrive can now check online any time of day or night at

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/online.htm. To use the new service, a customer enters the vehicle identification number and their driver's license or ID card number. If the site shows that the customer's title application was recently processed, it will provide the date it was processed. If there is a problem with the title application, such as an outstanding parking ticket, the site will request that the customer contact DMV by phone or email.

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